

Comparison Shopping:

You purchase a variety of goods everyday. Have you ever compared the quantity of similar products to determine the best value before making a purchase? Often manufacturers standardize the packaging and quantity to make comparisons and marketing easier. An example is the 12 fluid ounce soft drink can.



All packages offered for sale must have a quantity statement. This requirement allows the consumer to compare price values. Almost all the products we purchase at a grocery store are packaged and have a “net weight” statement. Be aware that the weight of the container or wrapping (called tare) must not be included in the weight statement.

To determine the true value of a product, read the unit price, not just the package price. The unit price information is usually on a sticker located on the shelf that holds the item. The package price only tells you the cost of the entire item. The unit price shows the cost per pound, ounce, etc. Taking a moment to compare this information in similar products will help you get the best value for your dollar.



Packaging can be deceptive! The “Family Size” or “economy pack” is not necessarily the best value. Compare the prices per ounce/pound between sizes offered for sale.

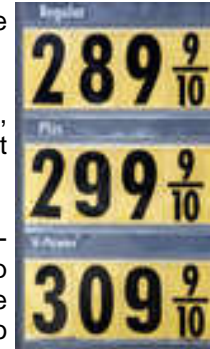
When Buying Gasoline:

Verify that the posted price for gasoline is the actual price being charged at the pump.



Before you begin dispensing fuel, make sure the meter starts at zero.

When the transaction is completed and before you hang up the nozzle, make sure the indicators are not continuing to advance. This can be caused by a leak.



In California, air and water are free if you purchase motor vehicle fuel. If you encounter a problem regarding free air and water, please contact the State Division of Measurement Standards at (800) 356-7057 to file a complaint.

A service station must post if they offer or do not offer refueling service to disabled drivers. If the service station provides service to disabled drivers the price charged for the fuel cannot be greater than the self-service price.



Why are gas prices higher in California?

The State of California has its own requirements for gasoline and diesel fuel that are more stringent than the Federal requirements. The reformulated gasoline that is required in California costs more to produce and therefore the additional costs are passed on to the consumer. Furthermore, local and State tax is added on top of the Federal excise tax. California tends to have a higher tax rate than other states.

If you have a Discrepancy:

If you discover a discrepancy, point out the problem to the cashier or store manager. If you are not confident that the problem has been resolved, please contact our office immediately at **(800) 734-9459** or **(909) 387-2140**. This will allow us to resolve the issue quickly and prevent other consumers from being over-charged!

If your dispute is regarding a gasoline station, please note the location address, pump number and the grade of gasoline purchased.

CONSUMER PROTECTION PROGRAM



Department of Agriculture / Weights and Measures

Edouard P. Layaye
Agricultural Commissioner / Sealer



**777 East Rialto Avenue
San Bernardino, CA
92415-0720**

Phone: (800) 734-9459
(909) 387-2140
FAX: (909) 387-2449
www.sbcounty.gov/awm

History

For nearly one hundred years, San Bernardino County Weights and Measures inspectors have been working to protect consumers and businesses from unfair practices and incorrect quantities of products. As a result of a nation-wide crusade for accurate measures between 1909 and 1913 by the National Bureau of Standards, California adopted laws requiring weighing and measuring devices to be tested and packaged goods to have an accurate quantity statement. In 1915, San Bernardino County created the Department of Weights and Measures to enforce these laws in order to protect the general public and businesses alike.

Purpose

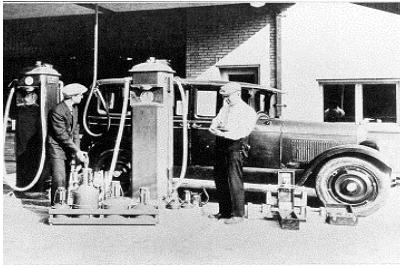


Almost everything we buy is sold on the basis of weight or measure. Early units of weight were often based simply on the load that an average man could carry. Measures of length and area were often assessed in relation to a person's body, such as the length of the foot, the span of a hand or the width of a thumb. This method often led to confusion, therefore

each country adopted its own units of standardized measures. However, as trade grew, so did the problem of different measurements. Today, standard units of measure are used worldwide although many measures such as "feet" and "pounds" are only common in the United States. Without standard measurements, it would be difficult to do even simple things like buying groceries, using a map or following the instructions on a recipe.



Our consumer protection programs are designed to promote fair business competition by ensuring accurate measurement of goods. We do this by annually inspecting all commercially used weighing or measuring devices within the County of San Bernardino. A seal is placed on devices to inform consumers that the device passed official testing procedures and was accurate on the date of test. Look for the accuracy Seal!



Packages are routinely inspected to ensure the quantity statements are correct. These inspections are made at manufacturing plants and retail store locations. Manufacturers pack as close to the stated quantity as possible. Sometimes a mistake can happen and a package does not contain the correct amount. These packages are removed from sale and must be corrected.



Be a Wise Consumer



The majority of businesses sell their products and services in an honest manner, however mistakes can happen. You can help protect yourself by following a few simple tips to make you a wiser consumer and ensure you are getting what you pay for.

When a scale is used in a transaction, observe the weighing process. Scales must be placed in view of the customer. Did the scale indicator read zero before the item was weighed? Note that the scale may read at a negative number to allow for the weight of the container (tare). If you have a question concerning the tare weight, ask to have the container weighed.



Scales that you use in the produce section of the grocery store are for estimating purposes only! They are not commercial scales.



Many stores use electronic scanners at the check-out counter. These scanners are linked to a computer that reads the UPC code and computes the price of the item. Check your store receipt for accuracy. Does the posted or advertised price match your receipt? The price charged must be equal to or less than the lowest posted or advertised price. Many stores have "Scanner Accuracy" policies. While it is **not** a law that you can have the overcharged item for free, many stores have a policy that entitles the consumer to some sort of compensation.

Bring your store ads with you when you shop. If in doubt, refer to the ad.

Calculate the "percent off" discount. Was the proper discount received? Many times an error goes unnoticed because a smaller percent discount was deducted giving the consumer the false notion that the price was charged correctly.

**20% OFF
ANYTHING
IN THE STORE**

An easy way to calculate the discount is to think of a percentage as "cents". Move the decimal to the left two spaces. For example, since 20% equals .20, multiply .20 by the price of the item to figure the total amount of the discount. Think of it as every dollar spent, you save \$.20!



Marinade or other solution may be included in the weight of enhanced meat products. However, the package label must state "includes" or "added" or other similar wording in the product name or printed on the label. Otherwise, free flowing liquid is not to be included in the weight of the meat product.

Individually wrapped candy sold in bulk displays must be sold by weight. The price of the candy is calculated by using a price per pound. The price must be true and **not** include the weight of the wrapping.



When purchasing meat, fish or poultry from a door-to-door salesperson, each package must accurately display the price per pound. Be cautious of door-to-door sales. Check to see if the company has a business license and call the Better Business Bureau to see if any complaints have been filed against the company.

When purchasing bulk firewood, make sure you get a receipt showing the seller's name, address, phone number, date sold or delivered and the price paid. Write down the license plate number of the delivery vehicle.

The measurement of a cord of firewood is 128 cubic feet. To find the total cubic feet multiply the average height by the average length by the average width. Before measuring, the wood must be ranked and well-stowed. Ranked and well-stowed means the pieces of wood are placed parallel to each other and touching so that air spaces are kept to a minimum. This picture is a good example of ranked and well-stowed.

